


MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT: Suggested Questions for Meeting with
Senator Stennis and Lao Minister of
Finance Sisouk

1. This memorandum is for your information.
2. Attached are suggested questions for your discussion with Senator Stennis and Lao Minister of Finance Sisouk. The suggested questions reflect the principal concerns of those United States Senators who are not convinced that it is in the best interests of the United States to continue supporting the military effort in Laos.
3. We understand that the State Department is arranging for Sisouk to participate in similar informal discussions with other Senators who are expected to mobilize support for the Administration's position on proposed amendments to the appropriations bill. Sisouk is accustomed to dealing with Congressmen and will be the principal spokesman in contacts between Prime Minister Souvanna's delegation and the Senate.
4. I have sent a copy of the attached questions to Sisouk so that he will be familiar with them and will have had a chance to consider his answers.
5. We have been in contact with Senator Stennis' staff in order to insure that the proposed questions are those about which Senator Stennis is most concerned. A brief biographic sketch of Sisouk has been forwarded to Mr. Goldsmith of Senator Stennis' staff for his use in preparing Senator Stennis for the discussions with Sisouk

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Chief, Far East Division

Attachment

cc: DDCI
OLC

SUBJECT: Questions Concerning U. S. Support for Military Activities
in Laos

These questions are presented from the standpoint of those Senators who are concerned about the extent and continuation of U. S. support for military activities in Laos. They are deliberately argumentative in order to facilitate full and frank discussion of the major issues involved.

1. What does continued U. S. support for the military effort in Laos contribute to the stability of Southeast Asia? How are developments in Laos related to the security of Thailand, South Vietnam and Cambodia?

2. Military and other developments in north Laos do not appear to be directly related to the war in south Laos and therefore to North Vietnamese use of the Ho Chi Minh trail. Please explain how and to what extent joint U. S. and Royal Lao Government (RLG) military efforts in north Laos reduce or divert North Vietnamese capabilities in South Vietnam.

3. Assuming that U. S. support for Laos will continue but that a ceiling will be imposed on the total amount of U. S. economic, military and paramilitary assistance, please identify by amount and program (e. g. economic aid, paramilitary support for guerrillas, conventional support to the Royal Lao Army, tactical air operations, etc.) those activities which could be reduced without prejudice to the overall effort.

4. How important is U. S. tactical air support for RLG military efforts and what progress is being made to replace U. S. tactical air units with Royal Lao Air Force capabilities?

5. What are the obstacles to a negotiated settlement of the Laos war and why has it not been possible to achieve a cease fire in the Plain of Jars?

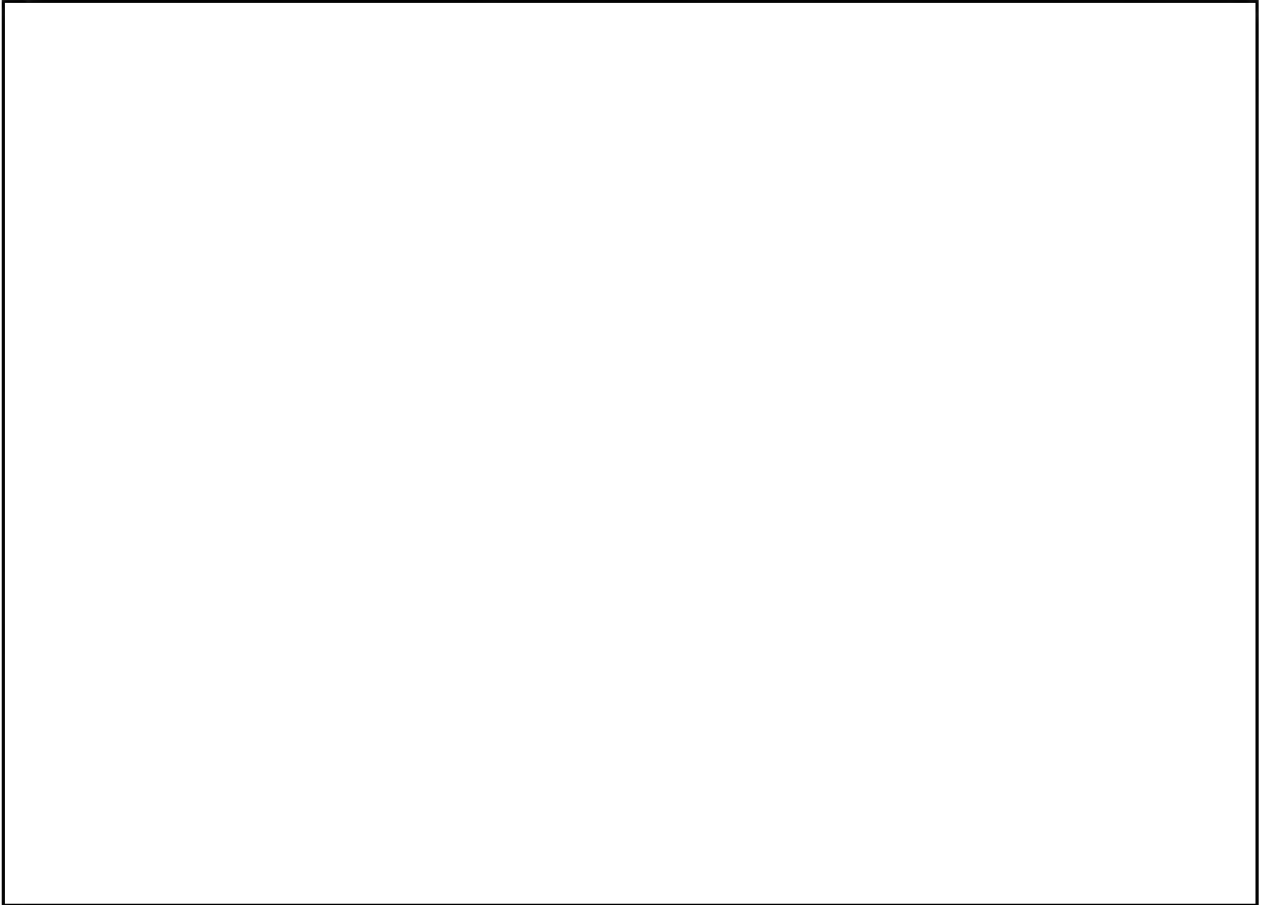
6. The increase in friendly casualties, the loss of territory to the enemy and the accelerated rate of U. S. spending in Laos indicate that our mutual objectives may be unattainable. Behind the surface of these figures are there any bright spots of enduring value and significance.

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7. What is the political and military significance of the increasing number of Pathet Lao who have rallied to the RLG?

8. What steps are being taken to close the gap between RLG conventional forces and the irregulars?

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SUBJECT: Memorandum for the Director re His Meeting with
Senator Stennis and Sisouk

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